

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 AID-05 TRSE-00 OPR-02 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 HEW-04 /073 W
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R 171959Z JUN 77

FM AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5018
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIO DE JANEIRO 2800

FOLLOWING, SENT ACTION BRASILIA, INFO SAO PAULO, JUNE 16, 1977,
IS REPEATED FOR ACTION/INFO:

QUOTE

CONFIDENTIAL RIO DE JANEIRO 2800

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS : PINT BR
SUBJECT : JUNE 15 STUDENT PROTESTS IN RIO DE JANEIRO AND
MINAS GERAIS

REF: BRASILIA 4592

1. SUMMARY. UNDER HEAVY SECURITY, SEVERAL HUNDRED RIO STUDENTS
DEMONSTRATED BRIEFLY IN DOWNTOWN RIO JUNE 15 BEFORE BEING
DISPERSED BY POLICE. NO VIOLENCE OCCURRED AND EVIDENTLY ONLY
FIVE PERSONS DETAINED. SMALL STUDENT TURNOUT PROBABLY REFLECTS
INDIVIDUAL STUDENT FEARS THAT DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH POLICE
MIGHT LEAD TO ARREST OR EXPULSION FROM UNIVERSITIES AS WELL AS
PREOCCUPATION WITH EXAMINATIONS AT THIS TIME WHEN SCHOOL SEMESTER
ENDING. NONETHELESS, PROTEST MOVEMENT OF LAST THREE MONTHS HAS
LED TO CREATION OF RIO STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS WITH PROBABLE
RESULT OF CONTINUED ACTIVE ROLE FOR STUDENTS HERE IN
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COMING MONTHS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JUNE 15, RIO DE JANEIRO STUDENTS HELD THEIR FIRST PUBLIC
(OFF CAMPUS), PURELY POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION IN RECENT YEARS.
STUDENTS, LED BY FIRST OF MAY COMMITTEE, HAD CALLED FOR
DEMONSTRATIONS ON STEPS OF STATE ASSEMBLY IN DOWNTOWN RIO TO
PROTEST JUNE 4 EVENTS IN BELO HORIZONTE WHEN POLICE BROKE UP

PLANNED THIRD NATIONAL STUDENTS MEETING. WHEN, PREDICTABLY, STATE GOVERNMENT AND STATE ASSEMBLY DECLARED THAT PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS WOULD BE ILLEGAL, STUDENT GROUPS DECIDED TO CALL FOR MEETING JUNE 15 ON URCA CAMPUS OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF RIO DE JANEIRO (UFRJ) AS FALLBACK POSITION IN EVENT THEY WERE UNABLE TO MEET AT STATE ASSEMBLY.

3. APPROXIMATELY 5,000 POLICE CORDONED OFF AREA NEAR ASSEMBLY EARLY JUNE 15 AND WERE STATIONED AT STRATEGIC AREAS IN RIO'S DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT WHERE ASSEMBLY IS LOCATED. NEVERTHELESS, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, ABOUT 300-500 STUDENTS CONGREGATED BRIEFLY ON MAIN TRAFFIC ARTERY, RIO BRANCO, AND MARCHED FOR FEW MINUTES SHOUTING SLOGANS CALLING FOR AMNESTY AND WORKER/STUDENT SOLIDARITY BEFORE THEY WERE DISPERSED BY POLICE. PRESS REPORTS VARY, BUT ONLY FIVE PERSONS WERE APPARENTLY DETAINED BY POLICE DURING INCIDENT AND WERE SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED. NO INJURIES WERE REPORTED. AT STATE ASSEMBLY, SESSION WAS SUSPENDED AFTER FOUR AUTENTICO MDB DEPUTIES DENOUNCED MDB ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT IN HARSH LANGUAGE FOR CLOSING OFF ASSEMBLY TO STUDENTS.

4. APPROXIMATELY 800 STUDENTS (PROBABLY INCLUDING MANY WHO PARTICIPATED IN BRIEF MANIFESTATION DOWNTOWN) SUBSEQUENTLY GATHERED PEACEFULLY AT URCA UFRJ CAMPUS UNDER HEAVY POLICE SURVEILLANCE.

5. BELO HORIZONTE STUDENTS EVIDENTLY DECIDED TO FOREGO FURTHER PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, BECAUSE OF CONCERN THAT IF ARRESTED THEY WOULD BE UNABLE TO TAKE EXAMS AND WOULD LOSE CREDIT FOR SCHOOL

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SEMESTER NOW ENDING. MINAS GERAIS STATE GOVERNMENT MEANWHILE RELEASED NAMES OF 56 MINAS STUDENTS WHO WILL BE INVESTIGATED FOR POSSIBLE INSTITUTION OF PROCEEDINGS UNDER ARTICLE 45 OF NATIONAL SECURITY LAW FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES OF JUNE 4. THESE STUDENTS ARE IN ADDITION TO 98 OTHERS, LARGELY FROM OTHER STATES, WHO HAVE ALREADY BEEN CHARGED WITH VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 45.

6. COMMENT: RIO STUDENTS ARE DIVIDED INTO AT LEAST THREE MAIN FACTIONS WHICH TAKE DIFFERING STANDS ON TACTICS TO BE EMPLOYED IN CURRENT SERIES OF PROTESTS. THERE WAS EVIDENTLY STRONG OPPOSITION TO CALL FOR PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION AMONG MODERATE STUDENTS WHICH MIGHT ACCOUNT FOR SMALL TURNOUT BOTH AT DEMONSTRATION AND MEETING AT UFRJ CAMPUS. HOWEVER, FEAR OF ARREST AND FACT THAT CURRENT SEMESTER IS ENDING AND EXAMINATIONS ARE ALREADY BEING CONDUCTED IN THOSE UNIVERSITY FACULTIES NOT ON STRIKE OR CLOSED BY UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIONS PROBABLY WERE MAJOR REASONS FOR LESS THAN IMPRESSIVE STUDENT PROTEST. JULY HOLIDAYS SHOULD PROVIDE COOLING OFF PERIOD AS WELL AS

OPPORTUNITY FOR VARIOUS UNIVERSITY RECTORS TO ATTEMPT TO SORT OUT NON-POLITICAL GRIEVANCES WHICH AT PONTIFICAL CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY LED TO STUDENT PROTESTS IN FIRST INSTANCE. CONGEN BELIEVES THAT RIO STATE SECURITY APPARATUS HAS HANDLED CURRENT UNREST WITH CAREFULLY TUNED MEASURE OF FIRMNESS -- AVOIDING CREATION OF STUDENT MARTYRS OR PUBLIC BACKLASH AGAINST POLICE. HOWEVER, AS CONGEN SAO PAULO HAS PREVIOUSLY INDICATED (SAO PAULO 1116), STUDENTS IN BOTH RIO AND MINAS GERAIS HAVE NOW DEVELOPED, THROUGH THIS PROTEST MOVEMENT, ORGANIZATIONS, ALTHOUGH RUDIMENTARY AND DIVIDED (RIO HAS TWO SUCH ORGANIZATIONS: COUNCIL OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES OF GREATER RIO AND METROPOLITAN UNION OF STUDENTS), WHICH PORTENDS A CONTINUED ACTIVE POLITICAL ROLE FOR STUDENTS IN MONTHS TO COME. SIMMONS

UNQUOTE

EMBASSY CONCURS.

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